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ABSTRACT

In 1990, a study was conducted to validate factors which relate to the persistence or retention of students enrolled in two-year college occupational programs, with a particular focus on minority students. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey of 731 students and 55 faculty members at 5 colleges in New York. In addition to the survey, interviews were held at the 5 sites with 77 minority students, 56 faculty members, and 11 administrators and institutional researchers. Study findings included the following: (1) support, usually from family, and the desire to rise above poverty were important to college success; (2) student success was positively correlated with a hospitable and accepting academic environment created by caring faculty, with departmental concern for students; (3) successful grade point average (GPA) was the critical factor in a student's commitment to completion, and in his/her sense of belonging at the college; (4) connecting with the institution through faculty, staff, or peer groups cultivated a sense of belonging which was itself positively related to favorable GPA; (5) among faculty, a hospitable environment for minority students was seen as the principal institutional variable contributing to student success; and (6) no significant differences were found in contributors to persistence between minority and non-minority students. The report concludes with a student persistence success formula, describing the features contributing to a positive college environment, realistic expectations, sense of belonging, and academic success. (JMC)

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Factors Related to Retention in Postsecondary Occupational Education: Emphasis on Minority Student Populations

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Project Report
A Model for Retention of Minority Students: Phase II
(VEA 155-90-1903)

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LaVerna M. Fadale

Two-Year College Development Center
University at Albany
State University of New York

in cooperation with

Bureau of Postsecondary Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

JC 900582

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FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION IN POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION: EMPHASIS ON MINORITY STUDENT POPULATIONS

Project Report

A Model for Retention of Minority Students: Phase II

(VEA 155-90-1903)

Two Year College Development Center
University at Albany
State University of New York

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document summarizes the results of a project undertaken by the Two-Year College Development Center, University at Albany, State University of New York, and supported by the Bureau of Postsecondary Grants Administration, New York State Education Department. The purpose of the study was to validate factors which relate to persistence or retention of students enrolled in two-year college occupational programs, particularly minority students.

Policy concerns regarding underrepresentation of certain groups in higher education and the professions motivate interest in persistence of minorities. Ethnicity should, by itself, have no influence on academic success. However, ethnic differences are often associated with educational and social disadvantages which are related to academic success.

The term "minority" is used in this report as it is commonly understood. While we acknowledge that this broad usage may do disservice to a specific ethnic group in a specific situation, it has been used as an inclusive term for reasons of brevity and economy of language. Therefore, we hope our use of minority and related words/terms will communicate even if there is some perception of inadequacy.

We wish to express our appreciation to the more than 700 students and 100 faculty/staff who willingly cooperated with our data collection. In particular we wish to thank the five administrators who arranged and coordinated the data collection and on-site visitations at their respective colleges:

John Baker, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Erie Community College/City Campus
Jean Carlson, Associate Dean, Elizabeth Seton College
Donald Gephardt, Dean of Instruction, Nassau Community College
F. Kenyon Moody, Dean of Student Personnel Services, Dutchess Community College
Carl Polowczyk, Dean of Academic Affairs, Bronx Community College

Without the cooperation of these administrators, and willingness of faculty and students at their colleges to share, the study and this document would not have been possible.

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It is our intention that this document will serve as a resource to administrators, faculty and staff in the community, technical and two-year colleges that will ultimately result in improved retention for all students.

Dr. LaVerna M. Fadale
Project Director
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FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION IN POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION: EMPHASIS ON MINORITY STUDENT POPULATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The student population of community and technical colleges continues to be enriched by diversity of not only culture but also of individuals with varying talents, experiences, commitments and approaches to learning. For many of these students, the community college, because of cost and location, is viewed as the way out, perhaps the only opportunity for higher education and the potential of upward socioeconomic mobility. The community college experience becomes a proving ground, a chance to "make something of one's self" and when appropriate, to make a better life for family.

In order to fulfill the expectations of student populations, community and technical colleges promote student success and achievement within a support structure geared to student needs. Recent research has suggested that both academic and social integration are critical dimensions of student persistence in the community college setting, and that these dimensions can be fostered by faculty and staff who are supportive, understanding and willing to interact with students. Personal backgrounds and expectations or goal commitments of students are also suggested in the literature as contributors to individual persistence or success.

Purpose and Format

Two major activities were undertaken during this project year: a research study, and second, a statewide seminar to discuss research findings with two-year college professionals concerned with student success. The report integrates and summarizes outcomes of both efforts.

II. PROCEDURES AND DATA SOURCE

In 1988 through 1989, an initial phase of the project resulted in the identification of retention-related activities and efforts that were in place at the two-year colleges in New York State. The purpose of most local activities was to improve and facilitate persistence of students and, particularly, the success of minority students enrolled in postsecondary vocational programs. The product of the first year was a compendium of these programs and was distributed statewide in the fall of 1989.

In the second phase, 1989-1990, the focus of study moved from college programming to reactions of students and faculty within selected occupational programs. Information and data were collected from 731 students at five college sites and 55 faculty members at these sites through a questionnaire survey. In addition, interviews at the five college sites were held with 77 minority students, 56 faculty members, and 11 administrators and institutional researchers. Selection of colleges was made on the basis of geographical representation, student population profile, and on the determination that the colleges had enrollments of minority students in vocational programs that would suffice in terms of data collection as indicated by State Education Department records. The five college sites that cooperated with the project were Bronx Community College, Dutchess Community College, Erie Community College/City Campus, Nassau Community College, and the Seton School of Associate Degree Studies of Iona. In general, the colleges selected were representative of three student body profiles or prototypes: a large majority of students with a minority heritage; less than 30% of students with a minority heritage; and a range of 30% to 50% of students with minority heritages.

It must be acknowledged that the data on which this document is based reflect the input of students who have successfully functioned within a collegiate environment for a period of time. Most students who responded to the questionnaires were in their second or fourth semester of enrollment. Thus, students from whom we've received data are individuals who have reached some degree of success by surviving at least one or more semesters of college. This leaves a question that will be pursued during the upcoming cycle, how would the students that left or attrited from the college differ from these students?

The profile of the students providing data are primarily full time with 65% falling at the age of 24 or less, 70% are female, significantly more than males. Primary program areas represented are nursing and med lab technicians, business and criminal justice which together account for almost 70% of the students. In terms of ethnic background, 55% of the students responding to the survey are non-minority, 45% of minority heritage including Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American Indian, and others who described themselves in a more specialized fashion than the given options. Further details regarding the source of data are presented on the following pages.

Data Source Summary

- 5 college sites:

  Bronx Community College
  Dutchess Community College
  Erie Community College, City Campus
  Nassau Community College
  Seton School of Associate Degree Studies, Iona College

  - Representative of student population make-up: >95% minority, <30% minority, and 30%-60% minority.

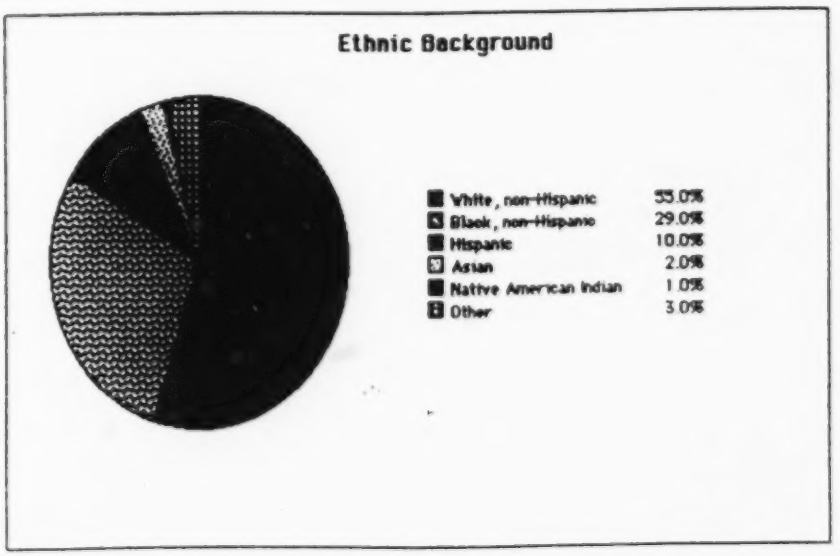
- Number of questionnaire responses:

Student	731
Faculty	55

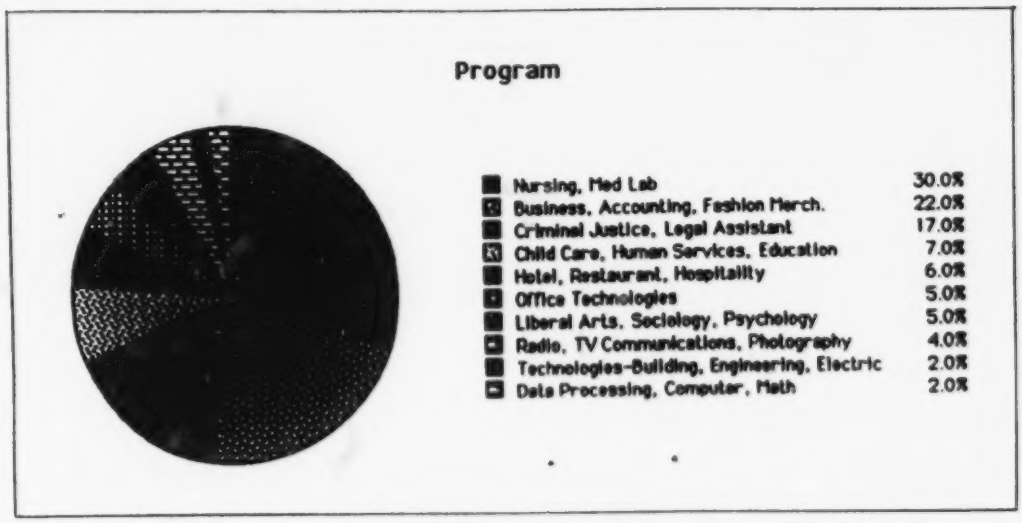
- Number of interviews:

Student (minority only)	77
Faculty	56
Administrators and Institutional Researchers	11

- Ethnic background:



- Program enrollment distribution:

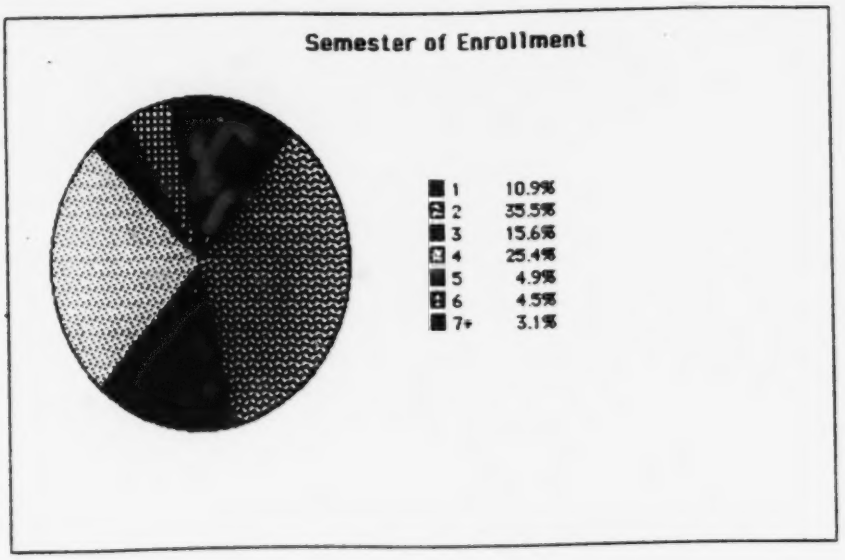

Program
Nursing, Med Lab 30.0%
Business, Accounting, Fashion Merch. 22.0%
Criminal Justice, Legal Assistant 17.0%
Child Care, Human Services, Education 7.0%
Hotel, Restaurant, Hospitality 6.0%
Office Technologies 5.0%
Liberal Arts, Sociology, Psychology 5.0%
Radio, TV Communications, Photography 4.0%
Technologies-Building, Engineering, Electric 2.0%
Data Processing, Computer, Math 2.0%

	Nursing/ Med Lab	Business Accounting Fash. Merchand.	Criminal Justice, Legal Asst.	Human Services	Hotel, Rest., Hosp.
WNH (N=350)	22.9%	26.3%	16.8%	8.9%	9.1%
BNH (N=150)	45.9%	16.2%	14.0%	5.8%	1.6%
H (N= 64)	26.6%	5.7%	15.1%	6.3%	1.6%
Other M (N= 44)	20.8%	19.4%	12.5%	11.1%	5.6%

	Office Tech	LA, Soc Psych	Radio, TV Comm, Photo	Technologies	DP, Computer Math
WNH	6.9%	3.1%	3.2%	2.0%	1.2%
BNH	4.3%	4.8%	3.2%	3.2%	1.6%
H	1.6%	12.5%	6.3%	-	4.7%
Other M	9.7%	5.5%	4.2%	2.8%	8.3%

Note: Data for OM (other minority) are averaged above and throughout report, will not necessarily = 100% for all variables.

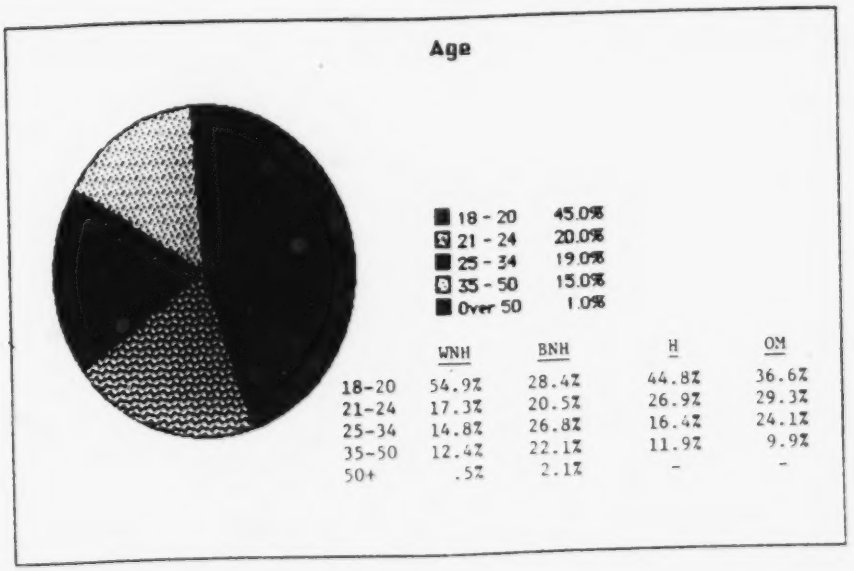
- Semester of enrollment:



- Enrollment status:

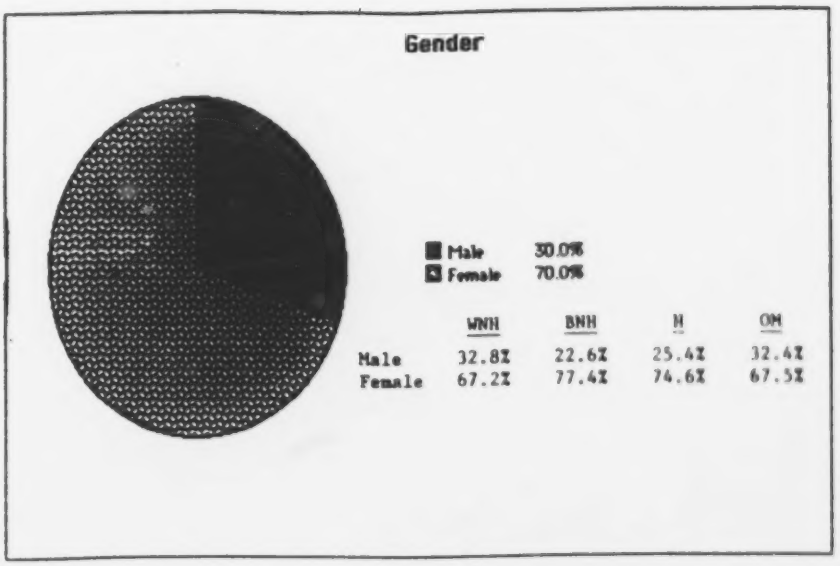
  81% Full-time 19% Part-time

- Age:



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
18-20	54.9%	28.4%	44.8%	36.6%
21-24	17.3%	20.5%	26.9%	29.3%
25-34	14.8%	26.8%	16.4%	24.1%
35-50	12.4%	22.1%	11.9%	9.9%
50+	.5%	2.1%	-	-

- Gender:



	Male	Female	Total Frequency
Non-minority	120	245	265
Minority	87	253	340
	207	498	705

Significantly more respondents were female:

3:1 for minority students, 2:1 for non-minority students

III. PERSONAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

• Families of non-minority students generally have higher incomes than families of minority students. Almost 50% of Asian, Native Americans and other minorities report an income of less than $15,000. Home ownership was viewed as another indicator of economic well-being. Families of minority students tend to rent more often and own less often than do families of non-minority students. Correlational statistics indicated a strong positive relationship between income level and receiving financial aid by both minority and non-minority students; also level of family income to home ownership. Several associations of income level to program of enrollment are reported on page 14 (G).

• More than 25% of all students in accounting/office technology, building management, human services and med lab generally indicated that families had incomes of less than $15,000. More than 25% of minority students in business, math, hotel and food report less than $15,000 compared to minority students in data processing with more than 25% reporting more than $50,000. Some of this disparity in income is related to the college's geographical location. It is well known that there are some sections of the state in which average wages are much higher than other areas of the state. Enrollment in programs at institutions in areas of higher income levels influence these data and must be viewed cautiously.

• More than half of all students share homes with a mother and more than 40%, a father. Non-minority students are more likely to have two parents. In single parent homes (24% non-minority, 48% minority), minority students (44%) are more likely to have a mother only. Non-minority students (76%) report sharing home with a mother and father compared to 52% of minority students; however, minority students share a home with spouse and children more frequently than non-minority students.

• Almost 70% of all students hold a job; 76% of non-minority students and 50%-60% of minority students. It was found that generally more non-minority and fewer minority students held jobs than statistically expected. Students who work outside the college experience tend to do so more to supplement their income than as sole income only. Money, however, was a concern to many of the students.

• The reported highest level of parental experience with education indicate that comparable percentages of parents, both minority and non-minority, have had some experience with college and high school. It is interesting to note that a negative correlation between student age and mother's education was found. Older minority students, therefore, are more apt to come from an environment where their mother has achieved less academically.

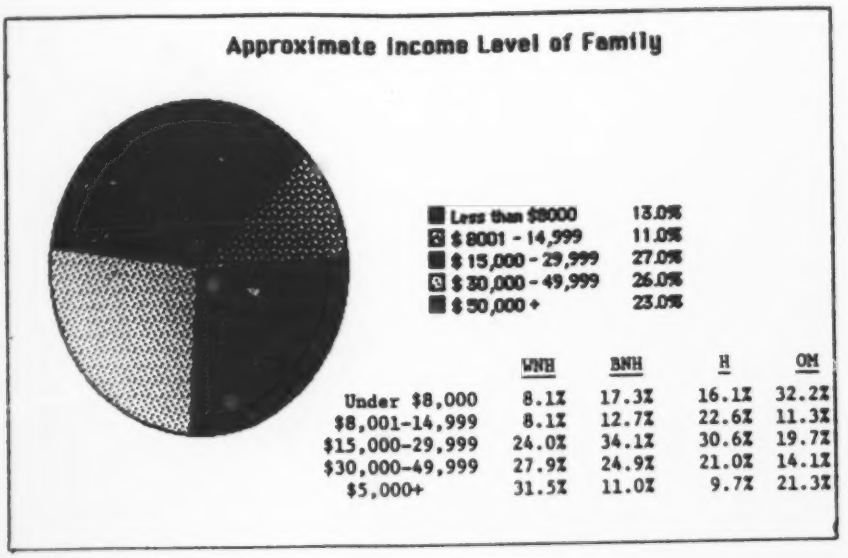
• More than 90% of all students indicated that supporters of their college attendance did exist, and in the majority of instances for all students, the sources of support were family members, parents, grandparents, or children. More than 80% of non-minority students acknowledged this family support, as did 75% of Black non-Hispanic (BNH) students, almost 69% of Hispanic students and about 50% of other minority students. Students often indicated that they were committed to program completion with the source of that goal strength credited to family.

• The majority of all students live at home, although some differences were shown in terms of commuting time. The most frequent indication of having to commute more than 45 minutes came from minority students, particularly Asian students ($>$50%).

• Within this category, areas important to college success are apparently support, usually family, and the strength of desire to rise above poverty to a level where money can become a more manageable concern.

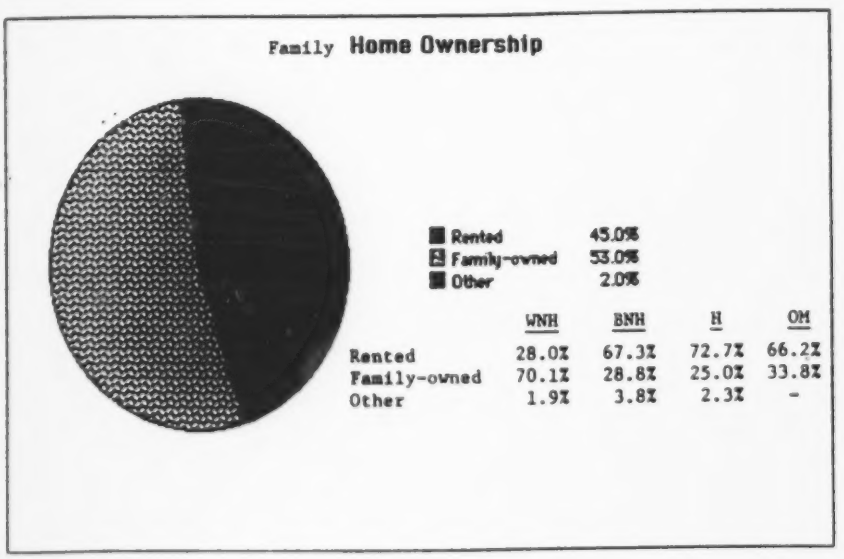
Personal and Economic Factors

A. Approximate income level of family



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Under $8,000	8.1%	17.3%	16.1%	32.2%
$8,001-14,999	8.1%	12.7%	22.6%	11.3%
$15,000-29,999	24.0%	34.1%	30.6%	19.7%
$30,000-49,999	27.9%	24.9%	21.0%	14.1%
$5,000+	31.5%	11.0%	9.7%	21.3%

B. Family home ownership



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Rented	28.0%	67.3%	72.7%	66.2%
Family-owned	70.1%	28.8%	25.0%	33.8%
Other	1.9%	3.8%	2.3%	-

- Families of minority students rent more and own less than do non-minority students.

Other family members sharing home:

42.5% Father	22.8% Sister	18.7% Spouse
56.5% Mother	29.6% Brother	28.8% Children
		13.6% Others

	Father	Mother	Sisters	Brothers	Others
WNH	56.0%	65.9%	29.7%	33.8%	9.1%
BNH	22.3%	42.5%	24.9%	22.3%	7.8%
H	40.3%	59.7%	31.3%	28.4%	13.4%
OM	19.5%	30.6%	13.9%	23.6%	5.5%

	Spouse	Children
WNH	16.5%	22.5%
BNH	20.7%	43.5%
H	19.4%	28.4%
OM	26.4%	32.0%

C. Percentage of students who work: 69% Yes 31% No

	Hold Job
WNH	76.9%
BNH	60.0%
H	66.2%
OM	51.4%

Hours worked per week:

8.7%	1 - 10 hours a week	27.3%	21 - 30 hours
29.9%	11 - 20 hours	24.8%	31 - 40 hours

- More WNH and fewer BNH hold jobs than statistically expected.

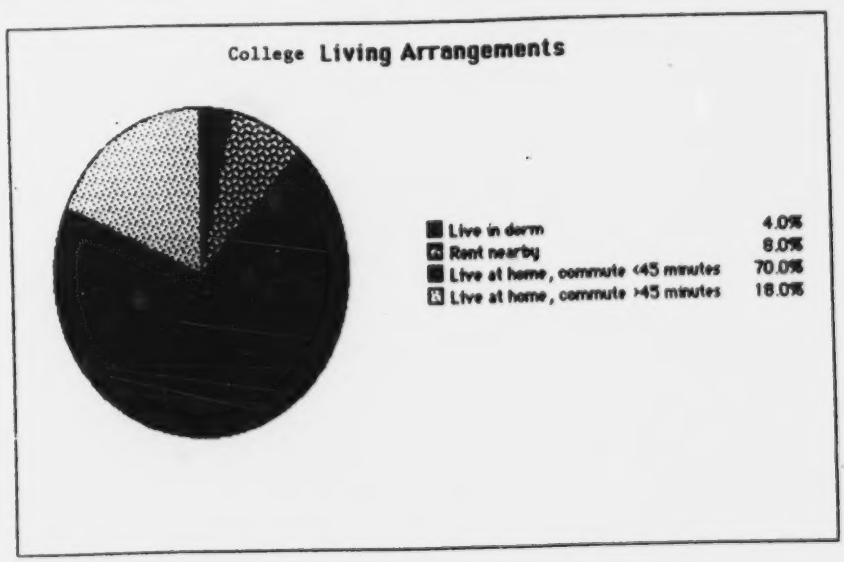
D. Parental highest level of education:

	Mother	Father
Less than a high school graduate	23.0%	23.9%
High school graduate	43.4%	38.4%
Some college	13.4%	14.4%
College graduate	11.7%	10.2%
Graduate courses/degree	8.0%	9.6%

Parental experience with college and high school:

	College Experience		High School Experience	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
WNH	19.2%	21.3%	76.4%	62.1%
BNH	19.6%	16.8%	67.4%	61.4%
H	23.0%	13.0%	67.7%	77.7%
OM	25.4%	29.4%	52.3%	41.9%

E. College living arrangements

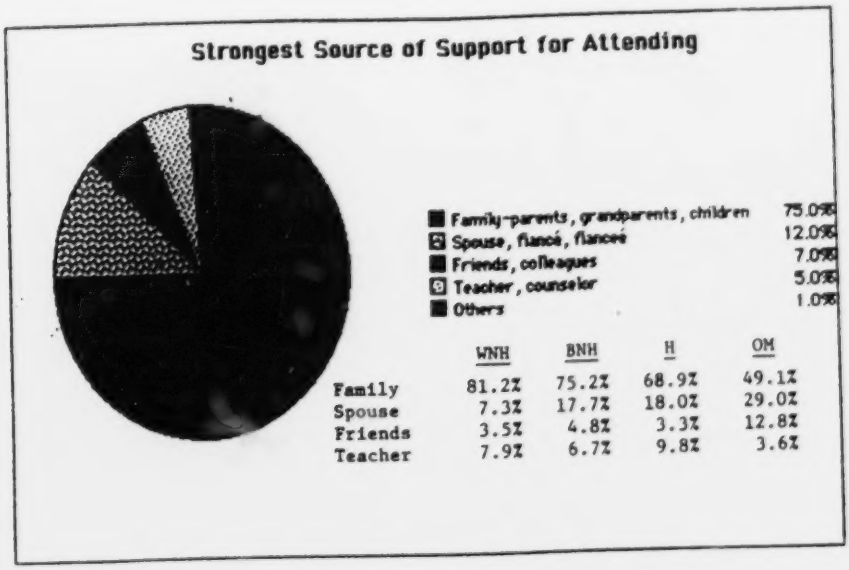


	Dorm	Rent Nearby	Home, <45 Min. Commute	Home, >45 Min. Commute
WNH	2.8%	7.2%	80.4%	9.7%
BNH	5.9%	7.5%	60.2%	26.3%
H	3.0%	7.6%	62.1%	27.3%
OM	8.3%	18.1%	41.7%	31.9%*

* (Asian highest >50%)

F. Existence of strong supporter(s) of college attendance

90.5% Yes 9.5% No



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Family	81.2%	75.2%	68.9%	49.1%
Spouse	7.3%	17.7%	18.0%	29.0%
Friends	3.5%	4.8%	3.3%	12.8%
Teacher	7.9%	6.7%	9.8%	3.6%

G. More than 25% of minority and non-minority students enrolled in Hotel and Foods and in Business report family incomes $>$\$50,000. Incomes of $<$\$15,000 are reported by more than 25% of minority students enrolled in Office Technology, Human Services, Medical Lab Technicians and Rehab Technology; by more than 25% of non-minority students enrolled in Data Processing.

IV. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

• Almost 65% of all student respondents indicated enrollment in their only or first choice of college with no significant differences among populations.

• Self-reported high school grades indicated that about 50% of all students were at the B grade level, with very few reporting a GED. Self-reported college GPA again indicate that most are in the B category, but a substantial percentage of all students, particularly non-minority and black students, report a grade level of greater than B.

• More than 80% of all students indicated a confidence in passing their current college courses, particularly in those program areas having 15 or more respondents. The correlation of GPA showed a significant relation to confidence in courses for all students.

• About 43% of all students had enrolled in remedial courses. For non-minority students the area of greatest deficiency was reported as study skills (WNH); math (BNH); reading (H); and writing and reading (A). About 50% of minority and 33% of non-minority students had taken remedial courses whether in vocational or non-vocational programs.

• Programs that were represented in discussions and interviews included business at five sites, criminal justice and nursing at four sites, human services and fashion merchandising at two sites, radio/TV communications, building management and food/hospitality at one site. Nursing students showed a strong relationship between perceived competence in passing courses and grade point average, and were more apt to recommend the institution if they had a sense of belonging. Radio/TV communications students also showed strong relationships among GPA, belonging and competence in courses. Minority and non-minority students in business carried a higher GPA than statistically expected, but these same students indicated less

of an awareness of their career field than peers in other occupational programs.

• In examining the connectedness to college, several items sought to determine the extent to which activities as reported in the literature were instrumental to success. Contacts with advisors and faculty/staff were pursued. As subsequently shown, minority and non-minority students are quite comparable except minority students tended to have more conversations of ten minutes or more with their academic advisors than did non-minority students. A greater percentage of minority students tended to have contacts with advisors, financial aid officers, faculty members and tutors than non-minority students. Usage of academic support services and activities differed in frequency for each activity or service.

• Interviews with faculty of the program in which responding students were enrolled indicated that retention is usually an institution-wide priority, most faculty felt more comfortable viewing retention for all students since the general consensus is that all students need support. Many report a college-wide retention effort or task force, but they sense that ultimately the academic support that the students need most emanates from departments, supplemented by the college-wide activities.

• In discussing whether the stimulus for retention is a correct-the-student or correct-the-institution perspective, faculty indicated that emphasis must be on student needs, and reasons why students leave before reaching their goals. A primary retention technique is remediation, and that instilling a capability to successfully link to a college-level program is necessary for all students who are underprepared. There was also concern expressed regarding the extent to which skills of incoming students can be upgraded within basic survival and academic skills.

• In general, the motivation to help was an institutional commitment

and the focus in most instances was to help all students in working through their problems. Efforts are underway in most institutions to address professional development and curricular updating.

• Some faculty feel there is no safety net for some students. Given open admissions, this may give false hopes of success, leaving departmental faculty to provide a supportive climate to overcome whatever misunderstandings and disappointments occur.

• Many faculty believe that students find them supportive, particularly in relation to academics, but admit that they are perceived as less so socially and culturally. Too, they feel that as a teaching faculty all staff are receptive to all students. However, they recognize that there are variances in the degree of sensitivity each individual faculty member may bring to a situation. Faculty need to become more aware of messages conveyed, thus the importance of personality and attitudes. A good teacher is viewed as a good teacher if he/she has a sincere desire to work with all students, is receptive and aware of cultural differences. A good teacher can integrate differences and promote a sense of belonging and connectedness of all students to the institution.

• As a rule, most students interviewed find the college experiences and faculty as helpful. Usually a college was selected because of location, programs, recommendations, articulation with high school, cost and family. Often they indicated surprise at the amount of required remedial work but were also positively surprised at the challenge, relationships and caring offered by many of the faculty.

• In most instances, the interviewed students indicated that there is help available in the college, particularly when dealing with academics. However, there is some concern over the lack of activities in which they

can participate. When the kind of support sought is not available from the faculty or institution, many students tend to turn to their peers for support. However, most of the students indicated that they are comfortable in the college setting.

• In general if the academic environment is hospitable and accepting, conditions created by caring, concerned faculty, and if the concern for success becomes an important goal of departments and the college-at-large, all students have a greater opportunity for success.

Academic Environment

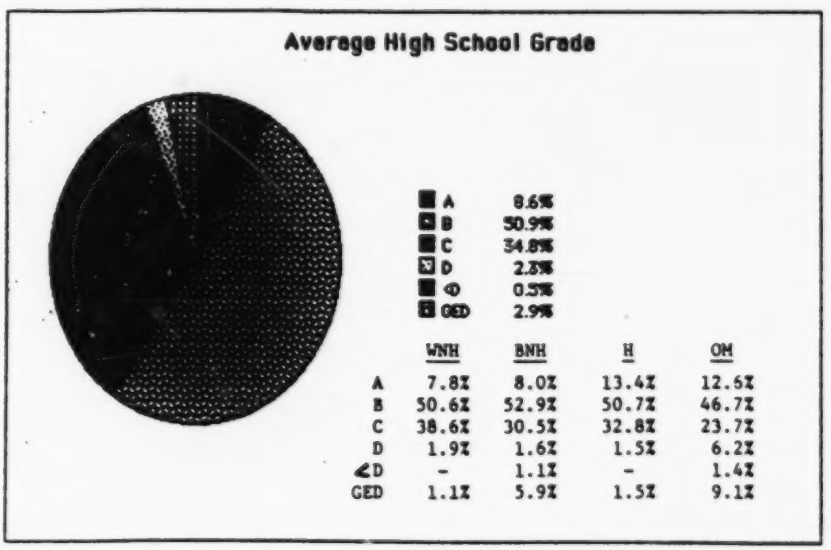
A. College choice:

		WNH	BNH	H	OM
30.2%	only choice of college	35.7%	22.7%	26.6%	24.7%
33.9%	first choice of college	28.9%	41.4%	31.3%	43.1%
35.9%	not first choice of college, first choice was (N=231):	35.4%	35.9%	42.2%	32.2%

Private	36.1%
Public	45.9%
Out of State:	
Public	11.3%
Private	5.7%
Proprietary	1.0%

64.6% WNH, 64.1% BNH, 57.9% H and 67.8% are at college of only/first choice.

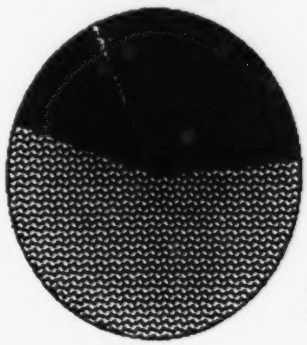
B. Self-reported average high school grade:



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
A	7.8%	8.0%	13.4%	12.6%
B	50.6%	52.9%	50.7%	46.7%
C	38.6%	30.5%	32.8%	23.7%
D	1.9%	1.6%	1.5%	6.2%
<D	-	1.1%	-	1.4%
GED	1.1%	5.9%	1.5%	9.1%

C. College grade point average (self-reported)

College Grade Point Average
(Self-Reported)



3.5 - 4.0	23.6%
2.5 - 3.4	56.6%
1.5 - 2.4	12.8%
<1.5	0.5%
Don't know	6.5%

GPA	WNH	BNH	H	OM
3.5-4.0	25.6%	23.4%	16.9%	13.1%
2.5-3.4	54.3%	59.0%	58.5%	67.5%
1.5-2.4	13.5%	11.2%	20.0%	5.6%
<1.5	.5%	-	-	-
DK	5.5%	6.4%	4.6%	13.9%

75% of all students report a GPA of 2.5+

D. Expressed confidence in passing courses

Confidence in Passing College Courses

Very Confident	37.6%
Confident	44.6%
Somewhat confident	16.0%
Not very confident	1.8%

	WNH	BNH	H	OM
VC	39.9%	32.1%	34.3%	36.9%
C	43.3%	49.5%	44.8%	43.2%
SC	14.9%	16.8%	17.9%	18.6%
NVC	1.7%	1.6%	3.0%	1.4%

80% or more of all students (program areas with N of 15 or more) express confidence in passing current college courses, students in the technologies and child care expressed confidence most frequently (>90%), data processing least (73%).

E. Remedial course enrollment

- Taken remedial courses at this college: 42.9% Yes 57.0% No

Area of enrollment

21.4% writing	23.6% math
15.1% reading	2.8% language
5.6% study skills	2.5% other

	Percent Enrolled	Most Frequent Area
White, non-Hispanic	32.4%	Study skills
Black, non-Hispanic	57.7%*	Math
Hispanic	50.7%*	Reading
Others	37.7%	Writing, Reading (Asian)

*Significant

(Percentages may not equal 100% due to multiple responses/missing data.)

F. Number of conversations of 10+ minutes with academic advisor during semester

		Minority (N=110)	Non-minority (N=105)
Not many, few (5 or less)	61.2%	66%	53%
Several, many (>5)	38.8%	34%	47%

G. Other than your academic advisor, about how many conversations of more than ten minutes with faculty and/or other college staff members during this semester:

29.5% 1 39.3% 2-4 12.8% 5-9 14.6% 10 or more 3.2% DNK

	WNH	BNH	H	OM
1	32.7%	29.0%	20.6%	18.7%
2-4	38.5%	35.8%	52.4%	43.7%
5-9	12.7%	14.8%	11.1%	12.3%
10+	11.5%	17.9%	12.7%	22.0%
DK	3.9%	1.9%	1.6%	3.3%

H. Contacts with college office or position titles and satisfaction of contact

Office or Person	Satisfactory Contact	Unsatisfactory Contact	No Response
Advisor	80.1%	6.3%	13.6%
Counseling Center	30.1%	4.6%	65.3%
Financial Aid	57.1%	15.7%	27.2%
A Faculty Member	82.3%	3.3%	14.4%
Another Faculty Member	67.0%	2.8%	30.2%
Tutor	25.6%	2.6%	71.8%
Admissions	60.4%	7.7%	31.9%
Library	73.1%	4.7%	22.2%
Secretary	34.8%	5.1%	60.1%
Security/Traffic	27.3%	16.3%	56.4%
Learning Center	35.6%	3.0%	61.4%

I. Use of academic support services and activities

46.1% Received financial support
17.7% Attended festivals or events that celebrate cultural diversity on campus
2.8% Joined an ethnic club on campus
15.3% Interacted and talked with minority faculty members
21.8% Heard college representatives talk about the college before I enrolled
31.6% Attended an orientation or summer program that helped me get ready for college
48.4% Received help in selection of courses and with the registration process
31.9% Took a number of tests which identified where I needed more work in order to be a success in college
19.8% Took advantage of tutoring services
2.8% Participated in a mentoring program
45.0% Received academic advising related to the selection of courses and programs
23.6% Received counseling and guidance related to myself and my expectations

(Multiple responses, does not = 100%)

Selected Comparisons:

Financial Aid - Non-minority <40%; Minority >40%

Orientation - Non-minority 37%; Minority 12-28% (highest - Hispanic)

Tutoring - Non-minority 13%; Minority 17-50% (lowest - Asian; highest - Native American)

Counseling & Guidance - Non-minority 19%; Minority 30-50% (lowest - Asians <9%; Native American highest - 50%)

- Satisfaction level was comparable for minority and non-minority students. Minority students used financial aid (M - 71.0%, NM - 47.6%) and learning center (M - 51.4%, NM - 23.7%) significantly more than non-minority students.

Summary of Faculty Survey Results

J. Retention-related activities in place as reported by faculty (N=55)

	Regular Ongoing Effort	Periodically Undertaken
Tutoring, mentoring or other academic support services	85.5%	7.3%
Intrusive academic advising as needed	72.7%	25.5%
Activities that promote teaching excellence for the good of all students	61.8%	32.7%
Academic assessment and existence of appropriate remedial courses to offset gaps in preparation	58.5%	18.9%
Bridge, transition and orientation programs for minority students	34.0%	9.4%
Evaluation of the effectiveness of retention-related activities targeted towards minority students as well as for all students	34.0%	17.0%
Professional development that addresses cultural diversity and its implications for instruction	31.5%	50.0%
Ethnic studies, cultural awareness activities and/or other events to increase cultural awareness	29.6%	38.9%
Early intervention efforts in public schools-elementary/ secondary	14.8%	16.7%
Program to involve parents in college planning and/or other student activities	1.8%	7.3%

K. Characteristics of College Environment as Related to Promoting Retention: Faculty Perspective

87.3% A generally hospitable environment for minority students
67.3% A priority given to retention throughout the institution
65.5% An awareness of minority student representation in terms of the minority representation within the community served
63.6% Career counseling and guidance that helps minority students translate goals into educational programs and courses
58.2% Financial aid programs tailored for minority students
54.5% Support for networks among students, faculty, and/or staff
54.5% Strong and visible leadership supporting retention efforts
45.5% Provision of incentives for activities such as minority recruitment, special courses, support groups, cultural diversity activities
40.0% A monitoring of completion/attrition of minority students on a semester or annual basis

(Multiple responses, does not equal 100%.)

L. Extent of Agreement with Statement by Faculty

Statement:

On this campus the gap is minimal between policy statements and actual practice as related to the institution-wide level of support for improving retention of minority students.

13.5% Strongly agree
40.4% Agree
15.4% Disagree
5.7% Strongly disagree
25.0% Not sure

Summary of Explanations: Support is for all students, commitment to retention is growing, too few minority faculty.

V. GOAL AND COMMITMENT

• Reasons given for college entry were similar for all students. A higher percentage of minority students (48% to 58%) planned to complete their degree and transfer than non-minority students (36%) Significantly fewer BNH students state the reason for college as "a start and transfer" when compared to other students.

• Most students feel on target for achieving their long-term goal. On a more immediate basis, more than 50% plan to seek a four-year degree as soon as the associate degree is completed.

• Several differences by program areas could be distinguished by the goals held by students. For example, 50% or more of minority students in nursing, criminal justice and hotel/food plan to complete their associate degree and transfer while 50% or more of the minority students in office technologies plan to complete their degree and obtain a job. Using this same criteria, 50% or more of non-minority students in criminal justice and fashion merchandising plan to obtain their degree and transfer; in nursing, the intent is to obtain their degree and a job which is similar to building technologies students who viewed the experience as training for the job. In radio and TV communications, more than 50% of non-minority students plan to start college and to then transfer.

• In determining the strength of students' goal commitment to their long-term goal, all students compare favorably. Asian students most frequently (75%) indicated that they must reach their goal in order to be happy.

• More than 90% of all students express some knowledge about the career area of their programs.

• A significant correlation was found between the strength of goal and grade point average. One reason to examine goal and commitment was to determine if any differences existed between minority and non-minority students on these dimensions. Faculty interviews indicated that any differences often reflected money and family problems, but being educationally disadvantaged cuts across the total student population. In some instances, there may be a concentration of insufficient language skills and/or lack of goal orientation.

• The importance of a person forging a link to the college was underscored, particularly in those instances where no external support system exists for a student. If any external support function exists, the college system is able to function more effectively. If not, outside support must be substituted for by an individual or group on the campus if a student is to succeed. Building these connections and promoting a sense of belonging provide a rationale for clubs and other activities, since it's been stated that although the function itself might not be viewed as important to education, the act of belonging to a part of the college is significant. Clubs and other similar activities for minority students may become the connection point which helps them "fit" into the college community.

• Some faculty indicated that if students are the first in the family to enter college, they may have unrealistic goals because of the lack of family experience with college from which to judge the requirements necessitated by their goals.

• Successful students, minority and non-minority, who exhibit readiness, usually meet with success, particularly older students. Economics and

home situations become a factor across all populations. Many of the interviewed students look to education as a way to improve on the economic level in which they find themselves. They view the college experience as an opportunity to explore opportunities and eventually to work toward having some things they want in addition to what they need. Often career aspirations are described in terms of the helping professions as a social contribution to help reduce poverty. Many of these same students indicate that it is difficult to relate to faculty and staff who they perceive do not know poverty. If they are the first to graduate from college, the family provides a strong motivation and they become a role model for their family.

- Economics provide a motivation for some students regardless of ethnic heritage to advance and become that model for their family. In examining the question of differences between minority and non-minority students it becomes somewhat clouded, and seems more related to being economically disadvantaged and poor family situations. Overall, the grade point average, the symbol of success, is the critical factor of goal strength, commitment of completion, sense of belonging at the college, and institutional loyalty. It can be concluded that academic success is in itself both goal and motivator.

Goal and Commitment

	A. Reason for college entry	WNH	BNH	H	OM
42.4%	To complete the associate degree and transfer	36.5%	48.7%	46.3%	52.8%
32.5%	To complete the associate degree and get a good job	33.8%	33.2%	23.9%	27.8%
5.8%	To try college to see if I like it	4.9%	6.2%	11.9%	1.4%
6.8%	To get some training for a job	6.9%	6.7%	9.0%	4.2%
15.4%	To start college and transfer	19.8%	8.8%	14.9%	15.3%
1.2%	I was pressured to enroll	1.6%	.5%	1.5%	-

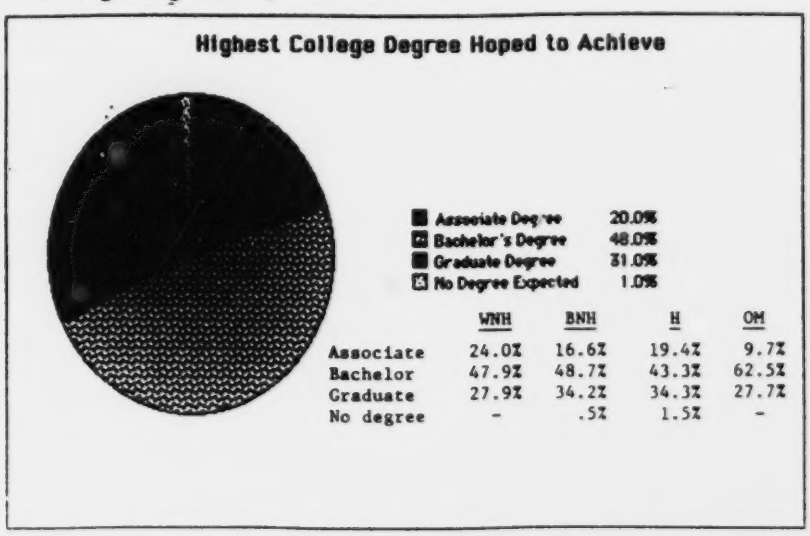
(Multiple responses, does not equal 100%.)

	B. Strength of commitment to goal				
47.2%	I have to achieve it in order to be happy.	46.6%	48.4%	46.9%	49.1%
34.1%	I'd like to achieve that goal but it's only a point along the way	33.2%	36.4%	31.3%	35.27%
15.2%	I'm open for change; if something better comes along, I'll take it	15.9%	13.0%	17.2%	12.9%
		15.9%	13.0%	17.2%	12.9%
3.5%	I don't know.	4.3%	2.2%	4.6%	-

	C. Extent of achieving goal				
27.7%	On target	31.5%	24.2%	18.5%	21.1%
57.8%	Working toward it	55.0%	60.5%	61.5%	66.3%
10.1%	Hoping I can make it	8.5%	10.5%	16.9%	12.5%
4.4%	Unhappy about my progress	5.0%	4.8%	3.1%	-

	D. Immediate interest after completing program or leaving this college				
53.3%	Go on for bachelor's degree	50.7%	53.2%	65.2%	66.7%
38.9%	Get a job	41.2%	40.0%	22.7%	31.9%
7.8%	Other	8.1%	6.8%	12.1%	1.4%

E. Highest college degree hoped to achieve



	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Associate	24.0%	16.6%	19.4%	9.7%
Bachelor	47.9%	48.7%	43.3%	62.5%
Graduate	27.9%	34.2%	34.3%	27.7%
No degree	-	.5%	1.5%	-

F. Career awareness for which currently studying

		WNH	BNH	H	OM
25.7%	Very knowledgeable	26.4%	24.3%	34.8%	12.5%
39.2%	Somewhat knowledgeable	37.9%	41.3%	39.4%	37.4%
30.8%	Knowledgeable	31.9%	29.1%	21.2%	48.6%
4.3%	Not very knowledgeable	3.8%	5.3%	4.6%	1.5%

G. Goal differences by program

Goal X Program

= >50% Minority - degree and transfer

Nursing
Criminal Justice
Hotel, Food

= >50% White - degree and transfer

Criminal Justice
Fashion Merchandising

= >50% Minority - degree and job

Office Technologies

= >50% White - degree and job

Nursing

= >50% White - training for a job

Building Rehab/Management

= >50% White - start college and transfer

Radio, TV Communications

VI. SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND BELONGING

- Approximately one-fourth (24.1%) of responding faculty indicate an awareness of racial tension on their respective campuses. Generally they stated that it mirrors society at large, but that a need exists for social and intercultural integration on their campuses.

- The majority (85.2%) of students found no difference in treatment from other students compared to 6% stating yes, most often BNH. Explanations given most frequently by students responding positively dealt with minority status, faculty-staff reactions, and/or a feeling of isolation.

- Participation in campus and non-campus activities was comparable across all student populations. More than one-third of students enrolled in selected vocational programs (business, legal assistant, data processing, engineering tech, child care and hotel/food/hospitality) indicated no time spent with non-college activities. About 50% of students in all vocational programs, except accounting and building technologies, did indicate participation in one college-related activity, for about one to two hours per week.

- The comfort level of the college was perceived as very comfortable or comfortable (positive) by 77% of all students. This sense ranged from 87.5% to 66% for minority students and about 78% for non-minority students.

- A sense of belonging to the college was positively indicated by more than 75% of all students (lowest --- Hispanic students at 75%). Identified factors that promoted this sense of belonging were a positive college environment and academic activities, followed by supportive and quality faculty, colleagues, networking, and a value of education itself. Factors which discouraged a sense of belonging were identified as an

unchallenging curriculum, a poor college environment, a sense of isolation, reactions from peers and a lack of participation in campus life.

- Recommending the college was significantly correlated to the sense of belonging. More than 75% of all students felt they would recommend the college to others; these feelings were primarily based on the quality of the program and/or the institution.

- The perception of future allegiance or loyalty to the college was related primarily to the personal success of individuals. Many placed a qualification on loyalty as dependent on the eventual payoff of the collegiate experience.

- The single greatest advantage of the college was identified by students as program (30%), and academic faculty support and caring (26%). Non-minority students also frequently identified opportunity for personal growth as an advantage.

- All students indicated that faculty are generally supportive, and that often becomes the reason for continuing. During interviews, minority students indicated a range of sensitivity exhibited by some faculty members. Too, several students shared that problem situations are often a function of language and/or lack of awareness of diverse cultures.

- Minority students indicated that they would welcome more help at the start of their programs, some adjustments in instruction to make some topics more realistic. Also, more faculty members (either minority or non-minority) who can relate to the problems that economic disadvantages and dysfunctional home situations cause for some students.

- Lasting friendships were described by minority students primarily as existing outside the college although they felt a positive rapport with

most peers and faculty. This rapport exists in spite of some lack of sensitivity and defensiveness by some faculty.

In total these data support the importance of connecting with the institution through faculty, staff or peer groups which, in turn, cultivates a sense of belonging and comfort level. Together these factors are positively related to favorable GPAs and college success.

Social Integration/Belonging

A. Sense of difference in treatment from other students:

6.0% Yes 85.2% No 8.8% Somewhat

	Yes	Somewhat
White, non-Hispanic	3.3%	7.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	10.4%	13.5%
Hispanic	1.5%	6.0%
Other	8.5%	5.6%

Explanations given: (N = 74)

Ethnic/minority status	22.9%
Faculty, staff reactions	16.2%
Feel isolated	12.2%
Age	8.1%
Student reactions	5.3%
Other (each less than 3%):	
Financial aid received	
College atmosphere	
Gender	
Religion	

B. Average number of hours per week spent involved in non-college organizations/activities:

	Total	WNH	BNH	H	OM
None	34.6%	33.1%	33.2%	42.4%	48.1%
1 hour	16.1%	19.0%	13.0%	13.6%	6.7%
2-3 hours	24.3%	22.4%	29.3%	18.2%	29.8%
4-6 hours	13.8%	12.7%	15.8%	15.2%	4.7%
7-10 hours	6.8%	8.2%	2.7%	7.6%	10.7%
11-15+ hours	4.5%	4.5%	6.0%	3.0%	-

- More than one-third of students enrolled in the vocational programs of business, legal assisting, data processing, engineering technologies, child care and hotel/food/hospitality indicated that no time was spent with non-college activities. Students in other vocational programs indicated a range of involvement, most at less than 32% frequency.

C. Number of college-related clubs, organizations and athletic teams in which participated:

F	Total	WNH	BNH	H	OM
1	65.2%	67.0%	64.7%	56.8%	66.7%
2-3	6.3%	5.4%	7.4%	4.5%	14.8%
4-6	1.3%	1.1%	.7%	2.3%	1.8%
7-10	.2%	-	.7%	-	-
More than 10	.2%	-	.7%	-	-
None	23.4%	23.8%	20.6%	34.1%	14.8%

(Missing data, does not = 100%)

- 50% or more of students in all vocational programs except accounting and building technologies indicate participation in one college-related activity.

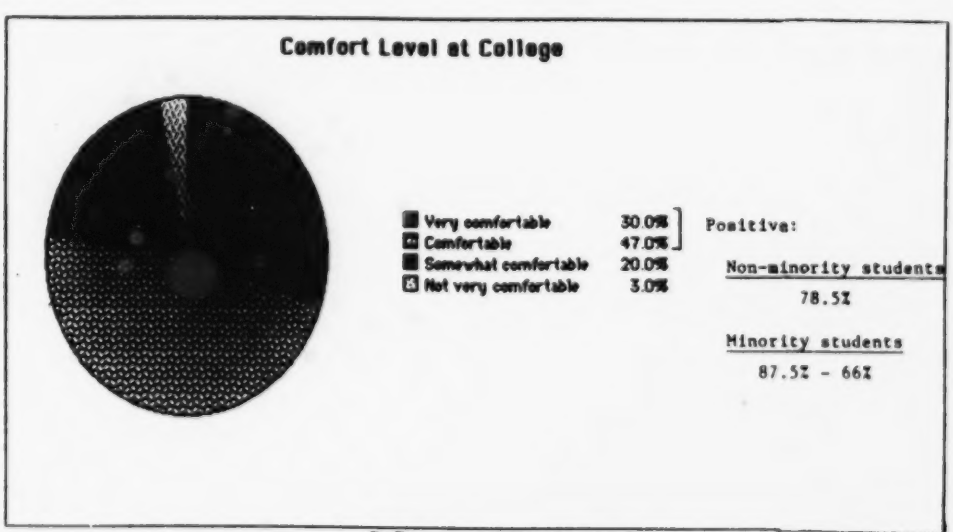
D. Average number of hours per week spent in extra-curricular college-related activities:

	Total	WNH	BNH	H	OM
1-2 hours	58.6%	58.6%	61.3%	58.3%	46.8%
3-5 hours	11.6%	10.0%	11.3%	8.3%	33.3%
6-10 hours	6.3%	5.9%	7.3%	5.6%	5.6%
11-20 hours	4.4%	5.0%	3.2%	8.3%	-
20+ hours	2.1%	2.5%	1.6%	2.8%	-
None	15.1%	15.9%	13.7%	16.7%	11.9%

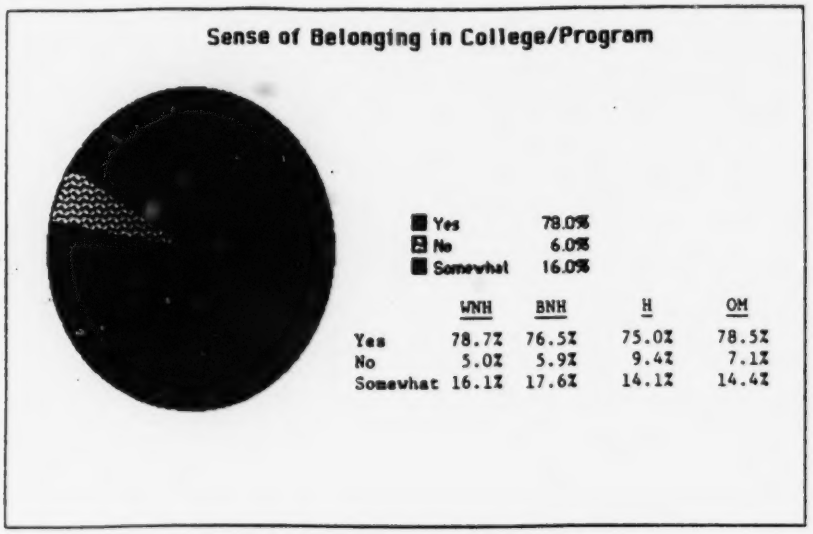
(Missing data, does not = 100%)

- 50% or more of students enrolled in the vocational programs of business and office technologies, nursing, criminal justice and legal assisting, child care, fashion merchandising and hotel/food/hospitality report 1-2 hours per week spent in college-related activities.

E. Comfort level

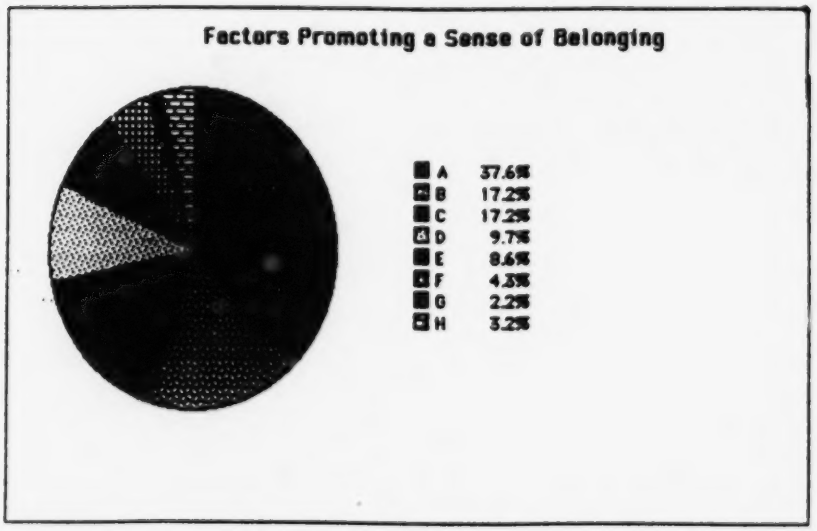


F. Belongingness at college/program



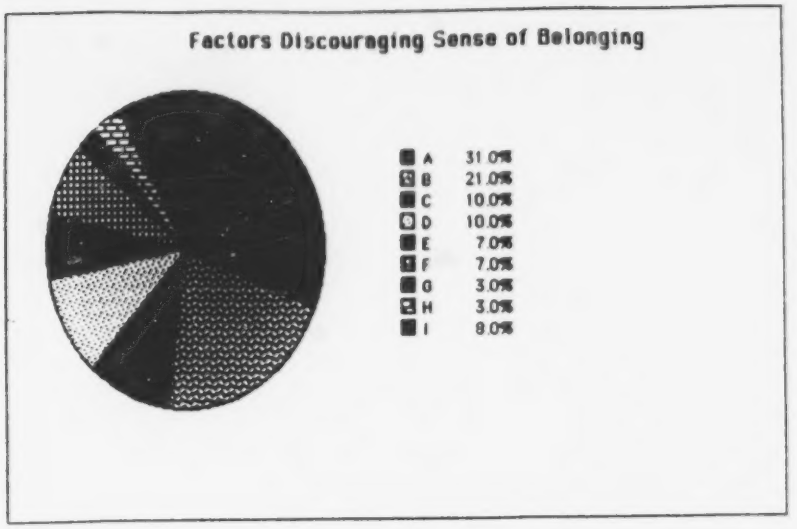
	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Yes	78.7%	76.5%	75.0%	78.5%
No	5.0%	5.9%	9.4%	7.1%
Somewhat	16.1%	17.6%	14.1%	14.4%

(Missing data, does not = 100%)



Key: A - Positive college environment*
B - Academic activities*
C - Supportive and qualitative college faculty
D - Colleagues, peers, friends, networking and involvement
E - Value of education
F - Self, work
G - Extra-curricular activities
H - Others

*Selected most frequently by all students.



Key: A - Easy curriculum, no challenge, poor college image and environment
B - Isolated
C - Peers and reactions
D - Little participation in campus life
E - Political, low priority
F - Large minority population
G - Staff, faculty reactions
H - Religion
I - No response

- All students identified reasons for belonging as related to program and institution most frequentlv.

G. Recommend this college:

	Total	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Yes	72.7%	76.3%	69.7%	57.8%	76.1%
No	5.8%	4.5%	8.4%	6.3%	5.6%
Depends	21.5%	19.2%	21.9%	35.9%	18.3%

H. Sense of allegiance/loyalty to college after leaving:

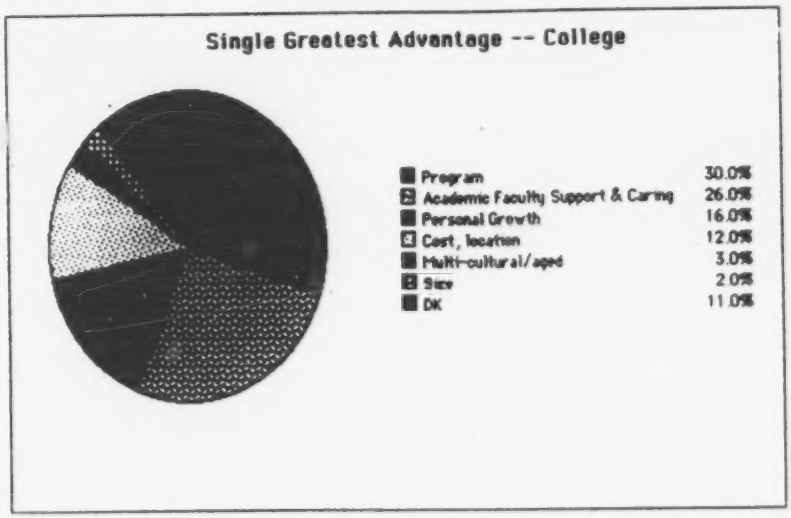
	Total	WNH	BNH	H	OM
Definitely	33.1%	29.8%	40.8%	30.8%	40.6%
Maybe	33.0%	36.4%	25.7%	33.8%	37.8%
Hard to say	21.5%	21.2%	20.7%	26.2%	12.5%
No	12.4%	12.6%	12.8%	9.2%	7.2%

Explanation:

Depends on personal success	29.7%*
Positive experience	21.6%
Environment, opportunities, support	19.6%
College image, location	4.0%
Will join alumni association	4.7%
NA	6.8%
Disappointed, no loyalty, too political	6.7%

*Identified most frequently by all students.

I. Single greatest advantage of this college:



Explanation:

Caring faculty, staff advisors, familial environment	27.7%
Quality education, job training, career potential	27.1%
Academic and financial support	17.0%
Facilities, location, scheduling	13.0%
Opportunities to achieve goals, self-achievement	9.1%
Friendship, peers, multi-cultural enrollment	4.0%
Don't know, none	1.1%

VII. A PERSISTENCE/SUCCESS FORMULA

This document has summarized the results of a study that sought to validate to the extent possible, factors that impact on the persistence or retention of students enrolled in two-year college occupational programs, particularly as related to minority students. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from 731 students and 55 faculty at five campuses representative of two-year colleges statewide.

Students providing information were generally full-time, 65% aged 24 or less, and 70% female. Program areas represented most frequently were nursing and med lab technician, business and criminal justice. Respondents were 55% non-minority and 45% minority, including Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American Indian, and others who described themselves in a more specialized fashion than the given options. Because most students who responded to the questionnaires were in their second or fourth semester of enrollment, these data reflect individuals who have successfully functioned within a collegiate environment for a period of time. This leaves a question that will be pursued during the upcoming cycle, how would students that do not persist differ from these students?

Data results were organized by four factor areas suggested by the research literature as contributors to retention or persistence, and presented in the previous pages of this report in detail.

In a seminar setting, results of this study were shared with about 70 two-year college faculty, staff and administrators interested in student persistence. As in this report, data were presented in four segments in addition to data source--academic environment, goals and commitment, social integration/belongingness, and personal/economic factors. Subsequent to data sharing, participants were requested to respond to two questions: What do you believe are the major factors related to

student retention/persistence that must be considered in promoting success of students, particularly minority, in postsecondary occupational education? Given these factors, what strategies, programs/services should be in place at colleges to promote persistence and success, and why?

The responses given by the 70 practitioners tended to blur the four segments used as the basis for data presentations. Attempting to synthesize the data results and practitioner responses led to a new formulation of factor categories. The four data segments were recast as three; a positive college environment, realistic expectations of career/education by students and a sense of belongingness by students. The dependent component, academic success, serves as the criterion of a successful experience.

PERSISTENCE/SUCCESS FORMULA

Positive College Environment + Realistic Expectations + Belongingness = Academic Success

Several statistical procedures were used during analysis of the data. Selected variables from the questionnaire data were used in a multiple-regression formula with GPA as the dependent variable. Approximately 25% of the variance in GPA could be accounted for using seven variables:

average grade in high school
strength of goal
making progress toward achieving goal
awareness of career context
confidence in passing courses
being comfortable on the campus
a sense of belonging at the college and program

Of these variables, confidence in passing courses in which they are currently

enrolled and feelings of making progress toward achieving their goal were the larger contributors with correlations with GPA of .44 and .32 for non-minority students and .30 and .22 for minority students.

Confidence in passing courses in turn correlated significantly for all students with goal progress (minority .44; non-minority .45). The relationship between comfort and confidence in passing courses was found significant for minority students (.24) but less so for non-minority students (.17).

Belongingness was found to significantly correlate with comfort for minority (.39) and non-minority (.32) students. Similarly significant relationships were indicated with loyalty and recommending the institution for all students (minority .27 and .43; non-minority .29 and .25 respectively).

These strong relationships among selected variables were instrumental in structuring the four components of the formula:

- Positive college environment incorporates, among others, dimensions such as academic support services availability, faculty/staff sensitivity to diversity, commitment to equitable treatment of all students, accessibility of faculty/staff for academic assistance.

- Realistic expectations is viewed as including awareness of selected programs and careers, realistic goal setting, goal strength, progress toward goal, self and skill assessment, and related factors.

- Belongingness is characterized as the existence of a positive connection with some part of or a person at the institution, a positive comfort level, a sense of loyality to the educational program or institution, and other similar dimensions.

- Academic success culminates from interaction/infusion of a positive college environment, realistic student expectations of career/self and socially/culturally integrative policies that promote comfort and belonging with the institution.

The practitioner responses to the seminar questions were categorized as per the four formula components that emerged from data analyses and are subsequently summarized.

Positive College Environment

Characteristics

- an atmosphere that stimulates student motivation
- a quality within the institution that is conducive to encouraging/building student self-esteem and connectedness to college
- a college-wide commitment for retention of all students until their individual goals are realized
- a community atmosphere that emanates caring and awareness of diversity
- a holistic approach toward improving quality of life for all students
- opportunities for interaction of students and faculty demonstrating values of diversity
- recognition that all students are not equally prepared academically
- integration of home and college support with opportunities for academic, social, personal help as needed

Recommendations

- promote an institutional and system-wide policy of pluralism
- define a campus policy for retention as a priority
- focus on quality of life with a celebration of differences and recognition of similarities
- develop a process, probably through Task Forces, that promotes college-wide excellence in both teaching and learning
- leadership provided for connectedness and support of students
- build a positive college image --- provide personalized student activities, establish a set of codes of conduct and understood expectations within an appealing physical facility
- offer cultural diversity programs representing all ethnicities with regularly scheduled events
- increase recruitment of minority staff in "contact jobs" with potential students
- administrative actions that include faculty availability outside the classroom and support of individual faculty efforts toward building success attitudes

Programs/Services:

- recognition of two perspectives regarding services and special programs --- students with special needs will need special or targeted programs/services; or, in order to facilitate integration, labeling and/or targeting should be minimal with a commitment for success of all students

- open access to academic and support services

- front-loading or blitz of services and support in early stages of college experience

Programs/Services:

- offer orientation programs that include information on multiculturalism, role models, "how to" facilitate relationships, peer bonding and meetings with parents and students

- provide opportunities for successful students to address incoming students

- institute a college success course for incoming students; implement strong freshman support programs including immediate follow-up

- provide a highly structured and well-coordinated advising program which include the finer points of the financial aid process

- increase student awareness of staff and resources

- advertise availability of tutorial services and personal counseling services

- institute faculty mentoring that goes beyond, "I'm your advisor... what do you need?"

- provide comprehensive support services including tutoring, mentoring, mastery learning, developmental/remedial programs, advisement, orientation programs, summer programs, financial assistance, survival strategies with the flexibility of addressing student needs

- develop strong student leadership programs

- provide social, cultural and educational activities as cooperative efforts between college and community organizations, particularly cultural clubs and mentoring programs

- provide curriculum offerings and extracurricular activities with which students may identify and commit

- provide knowledgeable, accurate information so that students will be aware of expectations of their selected careers

College Personnel:

- a dynamic and inspiring faculty
- a pervasive sensitivity of students which translates into variety of teaching styles and curricular integration of pluralism
- sensitive initial and early personal contact between college and student

- offer counseling, assessment and appropriate placement procedures
- offer ESL programs, child care services, ethnic organizations/ clubs, career services, academic skills centers and other support activities
- provide services to help with legal aid and social services, financial aid, part-time employment
- identify probationary students requiring remedial and compensatory courses, provide pre-college orientations and on-going support
- provide a system for students to change counselors/advisors when appropriate
- eliminate/reduce use of labels such as "HEOP student," "minority student"
- institute procedures to ease resumption of studies when students "stop out"
- provide internships as a realistic work experience
- use special outreach strategies to reach some students as necessary
- advertise availability of student services to students within the community, particularly counseling and career services
- work with a number of funding sources that facilitate college access

College Personnel:

- professional development activities to sensitize faculty to issues of multi-cultural diversity of the student population
- seminars that encourage consideration of cross-cultural aspects of the student body; promotion of cultural interaction with both the "converted and non-converted" faculty and staff through release time for perhaps mandatory workshops; regular on-going faculty development programs including "homegrown" activities
- on-going committees to address multi-diversity on campus

- presentation of content material in such a way that takes account of possible deficiencies of students while not "watering down" overall quality of any college level activity
- availability of faculty to students, opportunities for identification with faculty and other students
- faculty and staff who are able to relate to various economic levels
- minority staff members in positions other than faculty administrators
- orientation to teaching to different learning styles
- employment of faculty members with commitment to diversity in education
- cultural diversity training for administrative staff since they are usually an initial student contact
- in-service faculty workshop addressing advising and mentoring
- assignment of a minimum number of minority students to all faculty members rather than one or two faculty members for all minority students
- college personnel and student representation on cultural awareness and sensitivity workshop committees

Realistic Expectations

Characteristics

- accurate information available to help students form realistic expectations
- congruence between student goals and student-perceived purposes of the institution
- college commitment to be aware of student reason for enrolling in college/program; awareness that depending on goals, students may need to become enthusiastic about what they're becoming with the end result (job, etc.) less significant
- congruency of family support with student goals and objectives
- student awareness and willingness to assume personal

Recommendations

- build realistic expectations at enrollment/recruitment with accurate information regarding length of program and demands of career selected; distribution of learning and program objectives so students are fully aware of what they're "buying into"
- facilitate awareness of services/support available at the college
- facilitate recognition that with appropriate support, students tend to rise to greater levels of achievement when nurtured
- provide programs and activities other than formal classes to increase awareness of world in general
- facilitate goal development that clarifies values and directions

responsibilities for own actions in reaching individual goals

- availability of social, educational, sports activities permitting student choice of experience

- recognition of student need with college attendance since students who perceive themselves as addressing growth are more likely to persist than those addressing deficiency needs only

Belongingness

Characteristics

- general interaction with one another, accepting each as as individual

- strong/required advising, faculty interaction, peer support, academic support services

- orientation of students into the college system and how to maneuver within that system; opportunities for linkage with cultural groups and activities reflecting diversity; a collaborative approach with family, community, schools and college; pervasive sensitivity to students with varied racial and cultural backgrounds

- no stereotyping of students from particular areas/programs which serves to separate students from each other and reduce needed interaction

Recommendations

- involve parents when working with high school students

- provide financial aid workshops when reaching out within the community

- integrate local citizenry into selected college activities such as topical seminars

- coordinate efforts with local public schools, perhaps at earlier pre-college stage --- elementary or middle school levels

Academic Success

Characteristics

- a passing GPA

- acquisition of communication and computation skills at a collegiate level

- competent to perform tasks within career selected at level expected of associated degree or other requirements as appropriate

- capable of transfer or employment

- personal sense of achievement

Closing Statement

By way of summary observations, the study has shown that a source of support, usually family, plus a strong desire to rise above their current economic level are crucial personal/economic factors of persistence for students. An academic environment that is hospitable, accepting, and staffed by caring and concerned faculty at both program and college-wide levels, results in greater potential for academic success. In turn, academic success serves as both goal and motivator because of the strong correlations among making progress toward achieving their goal, the sense of belonging and comfort at the college, and the symbol of success, grade point average. When a connection, whether academic or social, is made with the college, the chance of success is significantly enhanced.

When viewing student populations, minority and non-minority, no significant differences were found relative to persistence. Variation was more likely to be found when looking at smaller sets of data such as an individual program. Some differences were also found when the data were analyzed by college but in general, students are students, many with similar needs and varying states of preparedness for a collegiate experience that are associated with economic and educational disadvantages rather than ethnicity or locality.

As indicated previously, there are those who view special efforts for minority students as potential barriers to social integration and academic progress. This perspective sees special support as necessary for all students with similar needs. Others report special help efforts for groups of students with special needs are necessary in order to garner resources and emphases to help them overcome otherwise insurmountable barriers. Each college must determine the appropriate direction given local characteristics and student needs.

This study has also resulted in a persistence formula or model that suggests that a positive college environment that helps students to achieve individual, realistic expectations while functioning in an integrated but culturally diverse society will result in academic success, and in turn, career success.

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APPENDIX A

SEMINAR AGENDA

Factors Related to Retention in Postsecondary Occupational Education: Emphasis on Minority Student Populations

Monday, September 17, 1990 — Desmond-Americana, Albany, New York

PURPOSE: To involve participants in discussion of selected project data, explore implications and identify recommendations for programs and services related to improvement of retention, particularly of minority students.

9:30 a.m. Registration (refreshments available)

10:00 Welcome, Introduction, Overview

LaVerna M. Fadale
Two-Year College Development Center

Michael King, Supervisor
Bureau of Postsecondary Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

10:30 Concurrent Sessions

LaVerna M. Fadale
Gene M. Winter

11:30 Concurrent Sessions Repeated

12:30 p.m. LUNCH

1:30 Concurrent Panel Discussions

Panel A --

John Baker, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Erie Community College, City Campus

Jean Carlson, Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs
Elizabeth Seton School of Associate Degree Studies

Bruce Ferguson, Assistant Dean for Under-represented Students
Nassau Community College

Panel B --

Carol Stevens, Acting Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
Dutchess Community College

Carl Polowczyk, Dean of Academic Affairs
Bronx Community College

2:45 p.m. Plenary Session

State Policies, Priorities and Plans regarding Minority Student Persistence

Michael King, Supervisor
Bureau of Postsecondary Grants Administration
New York State Education Department

Presenter:

Jeanine L. Grinage, Director of the
Division of Postsecondary Equity and Access Programs
New York State Education Department

3:45 Summary, Evaluation, Closure

Project Staff

4:00 ADJOURN

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